

Meeting of the
Robbins Library Board of Trustees
December 12, 2017

MINUTES

Call to Order

Chairman Adam Delmolino called the meeting to order at 7:15. Attending were trustees Heather Calvin, Kathy Fennelly, Amy Hampe, Joyce Radochia, and Lois Rho. Also attending were the library director, Andrea Nicolay, the town manager, Adam Chapdelaine, and Jonathan Gates, trustee-elect.

FY19 Budget Presentation to Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine

As an introduction to her Powerpoint FY19 Budget Presentation, prepared with the help of Mr. Delmolino and Ms. Rho, Ms. Nicolay told the board that she had recently met with other town department heads to look at the financial future of the town and discuss issues that will impact annual municipal budgets in upcoming years. Also, the director had a preliminary budget meeting with Adam Chapdelaine, the town manager, Sandy Pooler, the deputy town manager, and Amy Fidalgo, management analyst in the town manager's office.

Ms. Nicolay noted that Robbins Library recently celebrated its 125th anniversary and Fox Library, its 100th. Expressing appreciation for municipal funding that provides Saturday hours, September through June at Fox, and Sunday hours and summer Saturday hours at Robbins, she noted that these hours are well used. Programming at Fox on Saturdays is well attended. A part-time technology librarian and a dedicated teen services librarian have also been made possible through municipal support.

The priority for the FY 19 budget is a full-time adult services librarian. In making the case for the need for this position, Ms. Nicolay emphasized that our current professional library staffing levels fall significantly behind that of comparable towns. While Arlington needs to maintain a competitive edge with peer communities, the most compelling argument, in her view, for this position to be full time, is that changes in the duties of an adult services librarian have placed ever-increasing demands on her/his time. Increased involvement in community activities, changes in the collections and in reference services are examples of these.

Looking to the future, with reference to Reimagining Our Libraries, Ms. Nicolay cited a study from 2009 that examined the impact of library construction on the use of Massachusetts libraries.

Mr. Chapdelaine, while acknowledging that he looks favorably on this request, could not make any commitment at this time. He went on to describe the significant factors involved in making budget decisions.

The Town Manager and the trustees discussed the outlook for passing overrides; Arlington will be facing both a debt exclusion for the rebuilding of the high school and a general override. Linking the two through a dual campaign could be advantageous to the passage of both.

Reimagining Our Libraries Working Group—Design Recommendations (vote needed)

Ms. Nicolay recapped the Working Group meeting of November 30 as recorded in the minutes of that meeting. All members of the Working Group were present, and after considering the pros and cons of each of the three design options for Robbins and Fox Libraries from Ann Beha Architects, they were able to reach consensus in choosing the designs that, in their view, best meet program goals.

Ms. Nicolay showed slides of Scheme C for Fox and Scheme C for Robbins, the options recommended by the Working Group for further refinement by the architects, pending approval by the board of trustees. Trustee representatives from the board on the Working Group noted that Schemes A and B did not fulfill all the program needs. Trustees asked questions about functionality, i.e., how the new spaces would work and what would change.

With respect to funding sources, it was noted that at this time, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners does not know when the next grant round will take place.

In the next stage we will expect to see phasing options from the architects that will help with project planning and future fundraising efforts.

Trustees referenced a comment by Mr. Chapdelaine about the high school being the only remaining major capital project in the near term, suggesting a general openness to the libraries joining the major capital projects queue.

The trustees need to vote in order to allow the architects to complete the development of the designs, the work for which we have contracted with them to do.

Ms. Fennelly made a motion to recommend that Ann Beha Architects develop option C for Robbins and option C for Fox with the modifications recommended by the Working Group in addition to further recommendations from the trustees regarding flow and access to the lower level of Robbins Library. Ms. Hampe seconded the motion. The Board approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes (vote needed)

The board reviewed the minutes of the November meeting, and made suggestions for additions and deletions. Ms. Fennelly moved approval of the minutes as

amended. Ms. Calvin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

Community Time

Jonathan Gates was invited to attend the trustees meeting while he awaits approval from the Board of Selectmen for his nomination to the board.

Winfield Robbins Art Prints Working Group Update

The loan on the Rembrandt prints was extended.

Ms. Nicolay invited Doug Heim, Town Counsel, to attend the February meeting, at which the Childs Gallery appraiser will be present to give an appraisal summary. It's expected that Attorney Heim will update the board on legal issues involved with regard to the print collection, including information he received from the attorney who handled the Boston Public Library prints matter.

Director's Report

Ms. Nicolay gave highlights of the November Director's Report. A social worker working with the Arlington Police Department has been able to help with disruptive patrons who may need social services.

Mr. Delmolino asked about staff attrition. Ms. Nicolay explained a current situation with an adult services librarian who will be leaving because she desires a part-time job, and Adult Services needs a full-time staff person in this position. On the positive side, every listed position draws a strong pool of applicants. Arlington is perceived as a good community in which to work.

Foundation Liaison Update

Ms. Fennelly reported that the Foundation's annual appeal raised \$23,876 +/- so far, exceeding their expectations.

Friends Liaison Updates

Ms. Radochia reported that the Friends will be selling or giving away old *Life* and *National Geographic* magazines on the same day as Ecofest.

Both Mr. Delmolino and Ms. Nicolay attended the recent meeting of the Friends of Fox. Although there was no quorum, those attending discussed the ideas generated at a recent Wednesday night program designed to elicit suggestions for programming, fundraising, etc. Noted was the importance of balancing or coordinating Fox and Robbins events. Spreading out types of events over the year and avoiding programming conflicts is recommended. Saturdays are busy but do present challenges for upkeep.

It was noted the Friends of Fox continue to be very excited about the Reimagining Our Libraries project.

Communications

Ms. Fennelly received an email from Howard and Lenore Winkler, whose original letter regarding the lack of identifying information beneath the portraits in the elevator lobby lead to the posting of a plaque recognizing Maria Robbins and her husband Eli Robbins. The Winklers were pleased to have attended the 125th Robbins birthday celebration and to see the new plaque.

Unanticipated Items

There were no unanticipated items.

Date of Next Meeting

January 9, 2018

Adjournment

Ms. Fennelly moved to adjourn at 9:28. The board approved the motion unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce H. Radochia
Secretary Pro. Tem.

Materials Distributed:**Agenda**

Minutes of November meeting of the Board of Library Trustees

November Director's Report

Working Group Meeting/Reimagining Our Libraries: Minutes November 30, 2017

FY19 Budget Request Presentation (delivered via PowerPoint)